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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/784,205	02/24/2004	Hiroyuki Tokimatsu	04175.0056	9233

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FINNEGAN, HENDERSON, FARABOW, GARRETT & DUNNER LLP
901 NEW YORK AVENUE, NW
WASHINGTON, DC 20001-4413

EXAMINER	
DICKER, DENNIS T	

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
2625	

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Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)	
	10/784,205	TOKIMATSU, HIROYUKI	
	Examiner	Art Unit	
	DENNIS DICKER	2625	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE *3* MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1)☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on *04 August 2009*.

2a)☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b)☐ This action is non-final.

3)☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

4)☒ Claim(s) *1, 2, 4-6, 8-10, 12 and 18-24* is/are pending in the application.

4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.

5)☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.

6)☒ Claim(s) *1,2,4-6,8-10,12 and 18-24* is/are rejected.

7)☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.

8)☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

9)☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.

10)☒ The drawing(s) filed on *24 February 2004* is/are: a)☒ accepted or b)☐ objected to by the Examiner.

Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).

Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).

11)☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

12)☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).

a)☒ All b)☐ Some * c)☐ None of:

1.☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.

2.☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.

3.☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08) Paper No(s)/Mail Date *10/14/2009*.
4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ .
5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application
6) ☐ Other: _____.

DETAILED ACTION

Response to Arguments

1. Applicant's arguments with respect to claims 1, 2, 4-6, 8-10, 12 and 18-24 have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

Information Disclosure Statement

2. The information disclosure statement (IDS) submitted on 10/14/2009 is being considered by the examiner.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

3. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

> (a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negatived by the manner in which the invention was made.

4. Claims 1, 2, 4-6, 8-10, 12 and 18-24 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ishiguru Hisashi (hereinafter "Hisashi '290" JP 11-127290) in view of Mizusawa Hiroshi (hereinafter "Hiroshi" JP 10-105008).

With respect to **Claim 1**, Hisashi '290 teaches an image forming system **(i.e., Para 007, System of a plurality of printers)** comprising: communication unit for interconnection **(i.e., Para 0007 , Network connecting plurality of printers)** ; and a plurality of electrophotographic image forming apparatuses **(i.e., Para 0007, Plurality of printers)** each visualizing a latent image on a latent image carrier generated based on

input image data **(i.e., Para 0007, Printers can print on an latent image carrier image data received from an input device)** by a developer and transferring the visualized image to a recording material **(i.e., Para 0007 and Para 0012, Computer is connected to printers where the image data is transferred to the printers and the visualized image is transferred to a recording material by unit of a developer)**, which are connected via said communication unit **(i.e., Para 0021, connected by a via communication network)**.

Hisashi '290 does not explicitly teach storing usage histories of the latent image carriers of the image forming apparatuses and having a function of controlling image forming apparatuses outputting the image based on the carrier usage history data stored in memory to achieve approximately the same deteriorated conditions, wherein the usage history of said latent image carrier is modified according to a characteristic of deterioration through use of each latent image carrier.

However, the mentioned claimed limitations are well known in the art as evidenced by Hiroshi, In particular, Hiroshi teaches storing usage histories of the latent image carriers of the image forming apparatuses **(i.e., Para 0004-0005 and 0011, controller device storing usage histories of consumable goods of the processing units)** and having a function of controlling image forming apparatuses outputting the image based on the carrier usage history data stored in memory to achieve approximately the same deteriorated conditions **(i.e., Para 0005 and 0011,controller distributes jobs to processing units other than the ones near the end of life)**, wherein the usage history of said latent image carrier is modified according to a

characteristic of deterioration through use of each latent image carrier **(Para 0008-0009, number of sheets are counted and the life of the latent image carrier is modified based on result) .**

In view of this, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time of invention was made to modify the image forming system of Hisashi '290 as taught by Hiroshi since Hiroshi suggested in Para 0017 that such a modification would provide a printing system and a printing method that can give the ability of a controller to exchange consumable goods of two or more processing units and work can be done more efficiently in the printing system.

With respect to **Claim 2,** Hisashi '290 teaches an image forming system wherein the usage history of said latent image carrier is based on the number of transferred pages obtained with reference to an operating time **(i.e., Para 0079, the user can base the amount of operating time remaining on the amount of pages transferred which is obtained from each printer).**

With respect to **Claim 4**, Hisashi '290 teaches an image forming system wherein the image forming apparatuses outputting the image are selected so that the usage histories of the latent image carriers of the image forming apparatuses are approximately the same. **(i.e., Para 0069 and Para 0078,the printer with the least number of available pages is chosen based on the number of available latent image carriers so that they are all approximately the same in all available printers).**

With respect to **Claim 5**, Hisashi '290 teaches an image forming system **(i.e., Para 007, System of a plurality of printers)** comprising: communication unit for interconnection **(i.e., Para 0007 , Network connecting plurality of printers)**; and a plurality of electrophotographic image forming apparatuses **(i.e., Para 0007, Plurality of printers)** each visualizing a latent image on a latent image carrier generated based on input image data by a developer **(i.e., Para 0007, Printers can print on an latent image carrier, image data received from an input device)** and transferring the visualized image to a recording material **(i.e., Para 0007 and Para 0012, Computer is connected to printers where the image data is transferred to the printers and the visualized image is transferred to a recording material by unit of a developer)**, which are connected via said communication unit **(i.e., Para 0021, connected by a via communication network).**

Hisashi '290 does not explicitly teach storing usage histories of the latent image carriers of the image forming apparatuses and having a function of controlling image forming apparatuses outputting the image based on the carrier usage history data stored in memory to achieve approximately the same deteriorated conditions, wherein the usage history of said latent image carrier is modified according to a characteristic of deterioration through use of the developer

However, the mentioned claimed limitations are well known in the art as evidenced by Hiroshi, In particular, Hiroshi teaches storing usage histories of the latent image carriers of the image forming apparatuses **(i.e., Para 0004-0005 and 0011, controller device storing usage histories of consumable goods of the processing**

units) and having a function of controlling image forming apparatuses outputting the image based on the carrier usage history data stored in memory to achieve approximately the same deteriorated conditions **(i.e., Para 0005 and 0011,controller distributes jobs to processing units other than the ones near the end of life)**, wherein the usage history of said latent image carrier is modified according to a characteristic of deterioration through use of the developer **(i.e., Para 0008-0009, number of sheets are counted and the life of the developer is modified based on result) .**

In view of this, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time of invention was made to modify the image forming system of Hisashi '290 as taught by Hiroshi since Hiroshi suggested in Para 0017 that such a modification would provide a printing system and a printing method that can give the ability of a controller to exchange consumable goods of two or more processing units and work can be done more efficiently in the printing system.

With regards to the image forming system of **Claim 6**, the limitations of the claim 6 are corrected by limitations of claim 5 above. The steps of claim 6 read into the function steps of claim 5.

With regards to the image forming system of **Claim 8**, the limitations of the claim 8 are corrected by limitations of claim 5 above. The steps of claim 8 read into the function steps of claim 5.

With respect to **Claim 9**, Hisashi '290 teaches an image forming system **(i.e., Para 007, System of a plurality of printers)** comprising: communication unit for

interconnection **(i.e., Para 0007 , Network connecting plurality of printers)**; and a plurality of electrophotographic image forming apparatuses **(i.e., Para 0007, Plurality of printers)** each visualizing a latent image on a latent image carrier generated based on input image' data by unit of developer **(i.e., Para 0007, Printers can print on an latent image carrier image data received from an input device)** and transferring the visualized image to a recording material **(i.e., Para 0007 and Para 0012, Computer is connected to printers where the image data is transferred to the printers and the visualized image is transferred to a recording material by unit of a developer)**, which are connected via said communication unit **(i.e., Para 0021, connected by a via communication network)**.

Hisashi '290 does not explicitly teach storing usage histories of the latent image carriers of the image forming apparatuses and having a function of controlling image forming apparatuses outputting the image based on the carrier usage history data stored in memory to achieve approximately the same deteriorated conditions, wherein the usage history after maintenance is modified according to a characteristic of deterioration through use of each image forming apparatus

However, the mentioned claimed limitations are well known in the art as evidenced by Hiroshi, In particular, Hiroshi teaches storing usage histories of the latent image carriers of the image forming apparatuses **(i.e., Para 0004-0005 and 0011, controller device storing usage histories of consumable goods of the processing units)** and having a function of controlling image forming apparatuses outputting the image based on the carrier usage history data stored in memory to achieve

approximately the same deteriorated conditions **(i.e., Para 0005 and 0011,controller distributes jobs to processing units other than the ones near the end of life)**, wherein the usage history after maintenance is modified according to a characteristic of deterioration through use of each image forming apparatus **(i.e., Para 0008-0009, number of sheets are counted and the life span of the consumable good are reset after a serviceman exchanges consumable good [Para 0011]) .**

In view of this, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time of invention was made to modify the image forming system of Hisashi '290 as taught by Hiroshi since Hiroshi suggested in Para 0017 that such a modification would provide a printing system and a printing method that can give the ability of a controller to exchange consumable goods of two or more processing units and work can be done more efficiently in the printing system.

With regards to the image forming system of **Claim 10**, the limitations of claim 10 are corrected by limitations of claim 9 above. The steps of claim 10 read into the

With regards to the image forming system of **Claim 12**, the limitations of claim 12 are corrected by limitations of claim 9 above. The steps of claim 12 read into the function step of claim 9.

With respect to **Claim 18**, the combination of Hisashi '290 does not explicitly teach an image forming system wherein the developer contains color particles.

However, the mentioned claimed limitations are well known in the art as evidenced by Hiroshi, In particular, Hiroshi teaches an image forming system wherein the developer contains color particles (i.e., Para 0002 and 0008).

In view of this, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time of invention was made to modify the image forming system of Hisashi '290 as taught by Hiroshi since Hiroshi suggested in Para 0017 that such a modification would provide a printing system and a printing method that can give the ability of a controller to exchange consumable goods of two or more processing units and work can be done more efficiently in the printing system.

With respect to **Claim 19**, Hisashi '290 teaches The image forming system wherein a part or all of the plurality of image forming apparatuses connected to each other via said communication unit are of different models **(i.e., Para 0050, the Printers connected to each other are of different models).**

With respect to **Claim 20**, the combination of Hisashi '290 does not explicitly teach an image forming system further comprising a display unit for displaying a list of the image forming apparatuses selected for outputting the image

However, the mentioned claimed limitations are well known in the art as evidenced by Hiroshi, In particular, Hiroshi teaches the use of an image forming system further comprising a display unit for displaying a list of the image forming apparatuses selected for outputting the image **(i.e., Para 0011 and Para 0016, display listing image forming apparatuses selected)**

In view of this, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time of invention was made to modify the image forming system of Hisashi '290 as taught by Hiroshi since Hiroshi suggested in Para 0017 that such a modification would provide a printing system and a printing method that can give the ability of a

controller to exchange consumable goods of two or more processing units and work can be done more efficiently in the printing system.

With respect to **Claim 21**, Hisashi '290 teaches an image forming system further comprising an operating unit **(i.e., 70 of Drawing 2, control unit)** for giving an instruction to execute the output with specifying a part or the entire image forming apparatuses displayed on said display unit. **(i.e., Drawing 2 and Para 0019, gives an instruction to execute the output and for selecting an image forming apparatus displayed)**.

With respect to **Claim 22**, Hisashi '290 teaches an image forming system further comprising a host device control unit for selecting the image forming apparatuses outputting the image based on one of the data **(i.e., Drawing 2 and Para 0019, host device control unit for selecting an image forming apparatus based on the data)**

With respect to **Claim 23**, Hisashi '290 teaches The image forming system wherein said host device control unit is incorporated in at least one of the image forming apparatuses **(i.e., Para 0059 , host device control unit incorporated in one of image forming apparatuses)**

With respect to **Claim 24**, Hisashi '290 teaches an image forming system wherein said host device control unit is connected to said image forming apparatuses independently of the image forming apparatuses connected to each other **(i.e., Para 0059, host device control unit is connected to the master machine independent of the image forming machines).**

Conclusion

5. Applicant's submission of an information disclosure statement under 37 CFR 1.97(c) with the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(p) on 10/14/2009 prompted the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 609.04(b). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the mailing date of this final action.

6. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to DENNIS DICKER whose telephone number is (571)270-3140. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday -Thursday 7:30 A.M. to 5:00 P.M..

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Twyler Haskins can be reached on (571) 272-7406. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see http://pair-direct.uspto.gov. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/D. D./
Examiner, Art Unit 2625
11/25/2009

/Twyler L. Haskins/
Supervisory Patent Examiner, Art Unit 2625